

Step Six

Standardize improvements

Purpose:

The purpose of this step is to implement fully the actions taken to improve the system and to minimize the chance of going back to the pre-improved state.

Outcome:

The outcome of this step is the operation of the process at the new level of performance.

Tools:

Affinity diagram, check sheet, control chart, force field analysis, relations diagram, sampling, systematic diagram

Assuming that your tests yield improvements, you will have to standardize to hold the gains. Answer the questions below to be sure that your efforts have not been wasted.

1. Is a new flow chart required? In other words, have you changed the steps in the process? If you have made binding decisions, sketch the new flow chart.

The writing improvement team did not change the flow chart because no procedural changes were made.

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2. Will new instructions have to be written? Where should these be kept? How will you be sure that everyone who is affected will learn the new way of doing things? What about substitute teachers?

The team thought the instructions contained in the operational definitions were sufficient to maintain current, best-known practice even if the regular teachers were absent. Students were also very aware of the way the assessments and graphing worked.

3. What measures should be kept from now on? Make arrangements to collect data according to plan.

The team decided to continue to monitor the same two measures—student scores on the writing rubric for the district model and student attitudes toward writing.

4. Who will review the data on the measures? Who will act on findings?

Data reviews had been essential, so the teachers continued to hold review sessions between themselves and with students and parents.

5. Do you plan to try your results on a larger scale?

Scaling the project up became the central focus of the plan for continual improvement (see next page.)